



Brownfields 2009 Grant Fact Sheet

OAI, Inc., Chicago, IL

EPA Brownfields Program

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic development to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. On January 11, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. Under this law, EPA provides financial assistance to eligible applicants through four competitive grant programs: assessment grants, revolving loan fund grants, cleanup grants, and job training grants. The brownfields job training grants provide residents of communities impacted by brownfields with the skills and training needed to effectively gain employment in assessment and cleanup activities associated with brownfield redevelopment and environmental remediation. Additionally, funding support is provided to state and tribal response programs through a separate mechanism.

Community Description

OAI, Inc., was selected to receive a job training grant. OAI is a nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to provide education, workforce training, and employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities. Located in Chicago (population 2.9 million), OAI will



Job Training Grant

\$200,000

EPA has selected OAI, Inc., for a job training grant. OAI plans to train a minimum of 60 students, graduate 45, place at least 40 in environmental jobs, and track graduates for one year beyond the end of the training cycle. OAI will recruit participants from the target EZ and RC. The training program will consist of two nine-month cycles totaling 210 hours of training, including 40-hour HAZWOPER, OSHA lead abatement, construction safety, asbestos worker training, mold awareness, defensive driving, and forklift operator. Based on requests from potential employers, other courses that will be offered to specific trainees using leveraged resources include horticulture, computer refurbishing and recycling, and weatherization. Twelve certifications will be offered. The environmental health and safety training will be provided by OAI staff, while horticulture training will be conducted by the City of Chicago's Greencorps staff and guest trainers. OAI will work with construction trade unions, former graduates, green businesses, and brownfields remediation and redevelopment contractors to place graduates in environmental jobs.

Contacts

For further information, including specific grant contacts, additional grant information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at: www.epa.gov/brownfields.

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<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

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The cooperative agreement for this grant has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.

target disadvantaged residents living near the city's more than 1,000 brownfield sites. Many of these brownfields are located in the city's federally designated Empowerment Zone (EZ) and Renewal Community (RC). The combined population of the EZ and RC is more than 200,000. Seventy-two percent of this population is African-American and 24 percent is Hispanic. The city estimates that the poverty rate in the EZ is at least 50 percent. Residents of these communities face the residual effects of over 100 years of industrial activity and illegal dumping. Labor market analysis in the environmental sector indicates growth in demand through the year 2010. OAI's own survey of local labor unions and environmental employers reflects this growth in the projected demand for trained environmental technicians.